Impact of Approval of Bt. Cotton

4715. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any survey or study to know the impact since the approval by Genetic Engineering Approval Committee for commercial release of Bt. Cotton; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to clear the companies which come out with varities of Bt. cotton?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) accorded approval for cultivation of three Bt. cotton hybrids in March, 2002. The impact of cultivation of Bt. cotton will be known only after it has been cultivated.

(b) The companies which come out with varieties of Bt. cotton will have to comply with the provisions of Rules for Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/ genetically Engineered organisms or cells, 1989 notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Forests Guards

4716. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the present number of forest guards is inadequate to protect the wild life;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken to increase their strength;

(c) whether it is also a fact that in various areas, the forests guards are not being paid their salaries for many months; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) At present there are more than 2000 vacancies